

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A system for controlling moisture in a building wall having stacked straw bales at its core comprising:

a foundation wall having a generally horizontal top surface;

a plurality of straw bales having a width stacked on said foundation wall providing a core for the wall wherein the stacked bales have an uppermost bale; and

~~a step having an upper surface extending laterally and downwardly away from said foundation wall top surface whereby said step is outboard of and not vertically aligned with said bales~~

a pair of spaced-apart runners attached to the horizontal surface of said foundation wall creating a channel therebetween wherein the distance between said runners is less than the width of said straw bales at the core of the wall whereby said straw bales supported on said runners are disposed above the horizontal surface of said foundation wall and an air space is created between said foundation wall horizontal surface and said straw bales;

an interior membrane covering the bales on one side of the wall and extending above the uppermost bale;

an exterior membrane covering the bales on the other side of said wall and extending above the uppermost bale;

a wall bond beam disposed on said interior and exterior membranes above and spaced apart from the uppermost bale creating an enclosed air

space within the building wall above the uppermost bale and between said interior membrane and said exterior membrane at the top of the wall.

2. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 1 wherein said step extends from a location below the horizontal surface of said foundation wall.
3. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 2 wherein said foundation wall and said step are integral and both formed of concrete.
4. (Canceled)
5. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 4 1 wherein said runners are lengths of 2' by 4's.
6. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 4 1 further comprising:
drain rock disposed in the channel between said runners.
7. (Currently Amended) The system of claim ~~6~~ 1 further comprising:
a sheet of waterproof material disposed between said runners ~~and~~ on the horizontal surface of said foundation wall ~~and below said drain rock~~ and extending onto said step.
8. (Original) The system of claim 7 wherein said sheet material is building paper.
9. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 2 further comprising:
a wall membrane extending outwardly from the bales in the direction of said step and abutting the upper surface of said step forming a cold joint therewith.
10. (Original) The system of claim 9 further comprising:
a sheet of waterproof material disposed between said membrane and the upper surface of said step.

11. (Currently Amended) ~~The system of claim 1 wherein the building wall has an uppermost straw bale and further comprising:~~

A system for controlling moisture in a building wall having stacked straw bales at its core comprising:

a foundation wall having a generally horizontal top surface;

a plurality of straw bales having a width stacked on said foundation wall providing a core for the wall; and

a step having an upper surface extending laterally and downwardly away from said foundation wall top surface whereby said step is outboard of and not vertically aligned with the said bales;

wherein the building wall has an uppermost straw bale and further comprising:

an interior membrane covering the bales on one side of the wall and extending above the uppermost bale;

an exterior membrane covering the bales on the other side of said wall and extending above the uppermost bale;

a wall bond beam disposed on said interior and exterior membranes above and spaced apart from the uppermost bale creating an enclosed air space within the building wall above the uppermost bale and between said interior membrane and said exterior membrane at the top of the wall.

12. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 11 further comprising:

a plenum member disposed on the uppermost bale and in the enclosed space.

13. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 12 further wherein said plenum member is a U-shaped galvanized metal member with its open side facing said straw bales and supported thereby.

14. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 12 further comprising:
vents in said plenum member communicating said enclosed space with airspace exterior to the wall.

15. (Previously Presented) A system for controlling moisture in a building wall having stacked straw bales at the core of the wall and an interior membrane on one side of the wall and an exterior membrane on the other side of the wall comprising:

a wall bond beam disposed above and spaced apart from the stacked bales creating an enclosed airspace above the stacked bales and between said interior membrane and said exterior membrane at the top of the wall whereby moisture in said bales can rise into and accumulate in said airspace.

16. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 15 wherein the stacked bales have an upper most bale and further comprising:

a plenum member disposed on the uppermost bale and in said enclosed airspace.

17. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 16 further wherein said plenum member is a U-shaped galvanized metal member with its open side facing the uppermost straw bale and supported thereby.

18. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 17 further comprising:

at least one vent in said plenum member communicating said enclosed airspace with airspace exterior to the wall.

19-20(Cancelled)

21. (Previously Presented) A method of controlling moisture in a vertical wall having a core of straw bales stacked on a foundation wall, the steps comprising;

creating a sump at the bottom of the vertical wall at the level of the foundation wall,

providing a path for water in the sump to exit the wall:

creating an enclosed airspace within and at the top of the wall above the bales; and

venting said enclosed airspace so that moisture in said enclosed open space from the bales can escape from the wall.

22. (Canceled)

23. (Previously Presented) A method of controlling moisture in a vertical wall having a core of straw bales stacked on a foundation wall, the steps comprising;

creating an enclosed airspace within and at the top of the wall above the bales;

venting the enclosed airspace so that moisture in the airspace from the bales can escape from the wall.